AMENDMENT

Listing of the Claims:

Please amend the claims as set forth in the following listing of claims, which will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of obtaining a leukocyte lysate comprising RNA and reduced genomic DNA (gDNA) contamination, comprising,

fractionating leukocytes from whole blood using a leukocyte depletion matrix;

treating the fractionated leukocytes with an RNA preservation composition comprising a salt that infiltrates the leukocytes and (i) increases the half-life of the RNA compared to the RNA in cells not treated with the preservation composition and (ii) reduces the gDNA contamination of the subsequent lysate compared to fractionated leukocytes that were not treated with the preservation composition; and

lysing the fractionated leukocytes to obtain a lysate comprising RNA and reduced gDNA contamination compared to a lysate of fractionated leukocytes that were not treated with the RNA preservation composition.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the leukocytes are comprised on the matrix at the time they are lysed.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the leukocyte comprising matrix is stored for a period of time prior to lysis of the leukocytes.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the fractionated leukocytes are contacted with a lysis solution.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the lysis solution comprises a detergent.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the detergent is Triton X-100, Tween-20, SDS (sodium dodecyl sulfate), sarcosyl, or deoxycholic acid.

7. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the lysis solution contains a chaotropic agent.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the chaotropic agent is a guanidinium salt.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the guanidinium salt is guanidinum thiocyanate.

10. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the lysis solution comprises a ribonuclease inhibitor.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising extracting the RNA from the lysate.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein extracting the RNA is performed via an organic extraction.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the organic extraction is a phenol/chloroform extraction.

14. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising extracting RNA and DNA from the lysate.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) The method of claim **[[~~15~~]] 1**, wherein the salt is a sulfate salt.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the salt is ammonium sulfate.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim **[[~~15~~]] 1**, wherein the final salt concentration in the preservation composition is between 10 g/100 ml and a saturating concentration.

19. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the salt is present in the preservation composition at a final concentration of between 20 g/100 ml and the saturating concentration of the salt.

20. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the salt is present in the preservation composition at a final concentration of between 30 g/100 ml and 80 g/100 ml.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim **[[~~15~~]] 1**, wherein the RNA preservation composition comprises at least two salts.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the total salt concentration is present in the preservation composition at a final concentration of between 20 g/100 ml and 100 g/100 ml.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim **[[~~24~~]] 12**, wherein the extracted RNA has less DNA contamination than would RNA extracted from fractionated leukoeytes that were not treated with the RNA preservation medium.

26. (Original) The method of claim 1, further defined as comprising:
fractionating leukocytes from blood by capturing them with a leukocyte depletion matrix;
lysing the fractionated leukocytes to produce a lysate;
extracting the lysate with an organic solution to form organic and aqueous phases;
separating the organic and aqueous phases; and
isolating RNA from the aqueous phase.

27. (Original) The method of claim 1, further defined as comprising:
fractionating leukocytes from blood by capturing them with a leukocyte depletion matrix;
treating the fractionated leukocytes with an RNA preservation composition comprising a salt that infiltrates the leukocytes, increasing the half-life of the RNA;
lysing the fractionated leukocytes to produce a lysate;
extracting the lysate with an organic solution to form organic and aqueous phases;
separating the organic and aqueous phases; and
isolating RNA from the aqueous phase.

28. (Original) The method of claim 1, further defined as comprising:

fractionating leukocytes from blood by capturing them with a leukocyte depletion matrix;
treating the fractionated leukocytes with an RNA preservation composition comprising a salt that infiltrates the leukocytes, increasing the half-life of the RNA;
lysing the fractionated leukocytes to produce a lysate; and
isolating RNA from the lysate.

29. (Original) The method of claim 1, further defined as comprising:
fractionating leukocytes from blood by capturing them with a leukocyte depletion matrix;
lysing the fractionated leukocytes to produce a lysate; and
isolating RNA from the lysate.

30. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising assaying for the presence or quantity of one or more RNAs in the lysate.

31. (Original) The method of claim 30, wherein assaying comprises a Northern blot, RNase protection assay, hybridization reaction, microarray analysis, or reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction analysis.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein assaying comprises a reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction further defined as real-time RT-PCR or endpoint RT-PCR.

33. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein assaying comprises a microarray analysis.

34. (Original) The method of claim 34, where the microarray analysis comprises the use of a cDNA array, spotted oligonucleotide array, or *in-situ* synthesized oligonucleotide array.

35.-41. (Canceled)